

# Lincoln's Cabinet of All Factions





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PRESIDENT AND CABINET



Throughout his five years as President, Abraham Lincoln confronted great factional discord within the Republican party. Forming a competent, yet compatible, cabinet was Lincoln's first and biggest test as leader of his party. Indeed, the formation of "a please-all cabinet" was a formidable, if not impossible task. According to historian J. G. Randall, such a ministry would have recognized every section, comprised diverse elements of the winning though minority party, embraced opposites who refused to fraternize, . . . included Democrats and Southerners along with New Englanders and abolitionists, contained no more than one from a state while pleasing quarreling factions within states, and, as a kind of afterthought, would have assigned to each post a man adapted by training and experience to its duties.

Reflecting on Lincoln's cabinet woes, Justin Turner has written:

I doubt if any President had a cabinet consisting of so many diverse political elements or had as much difficulty with his cabinet as did Lincoln. Incompetent Cameron, narrowminded Stanton, overambitious Chase and contriving Blair created major problems, but by his tact and determination, Lincoln gained their respect and proved himself a master politician by keeping this four ring circus in proper juxtaposition.

In selecting his seven-man cabinet, Lincoln could ill afford to offend politicians, editors, or party workers. The Republican party, founded in 1854, was a precarious amalgam of former Whigs, Free Soilers, Democrats, and Know-Nothings. Lincoln drastically needed skilled advisors and department chiefs to bring stability and order to his government. In the opinion of Harry J. Carman and Reinhard H. Luthin, Lincoln formed his cabinet with two essentials in mind: first, both the Whig and Democratic elements of the Republican party would be recognized; second, representatives from the slave states would be included among his advisors. But the President required a winning team, one that would lose no votes in coming elections. In order to join this cabinet, explained Lincoln in February, 1861, a man "must be, as far as possible, like

Caesar's wife, pure and above suspicion, of unblemished reputation, and undoubted integrity."

For years American historians have charged that Lincoln helped secure the Republican nomination in 1860 by pledging cabinet posts to Caleb Blood Smith of Indiana and Simon Cameron of Pennsylvania. If such commitments were made, Lincoln was unaware of them. He stated positively that during the Chicago nominating convention he had agreed to no bargains. Whether commitments were made or not in Chicago by Lincoln's party lieutenants, strong pressure was placed on Lincoln to add Smith and Cameron to his cabinet. Both men had powerful supporters in their home states, and despite Lincoln's disclaimer, he would not have obtained the Presidential bid without the influential votes of delegates from Indiana and Pennsylvania.

Smith was a likely candidate for Secretary of the Interior in any event. A leader of the Hoosier delegation, Smith seconded Lincoln's nomination and campaigned heavily for him, especially in Indiana, a doubtful state. In addition, the Railsplitter was partial to Smith, the two men having served together as Whig Congressmen in the Thirtieth Congress (1847-1849). Lincoln was grateful for Smith's role in helping him secure both his nomination and his election. Writing to Smith soon after his nomination was confirmed, Lincoln explained: "I am indeed, much indebted to Indiana; and, as my home friends tell me, much to you personally." Finally, the Secretary of the Interior was traditionally, like Smith, a Westerner.

Cameron's appointment was so clouded by confusion and political intrigue that it has befuddled historians ever since. Scholars generally have accepted the argument that Lincoln appointed Cameron Secretary of War to keep a bargain made at the Chicago convention by his friend and political manager, Judge David Davis. But this was not so. All that Davis pledged at Chicago was that he would introduce Cameron's friend, Judge Joseph Casey, to Lincoln and recommend Cameron to him. Lincoln was then deluged with letters from Pennsylvania and Illinois Republicans favoring

Cameron's appointment to a cabinet post. To former Democrats within the Republican party, however, Cameron's appointment was anathema. Vice-President-Elect Hannibal Hamlin objected to the Pennsylvanian because he had deserted the Democratic party not over slavery, but because it opposed the tariffs iron-rich Pennsylvania clamored for. Another ex-Democrat, Senator Lyman Trumbull, branded Cameron a "trading unreliable politician" whose appointment would be a blot on Lincoln's official family. Writing to Lincoln, Trumbull explained: "There is an odor about Mr. C which would be very detrimental to your administration as our best friends think. They say he has not the confidence of the country. Not a Senator I have spoken with thinks well of such an appointment." Despite Trumbull's objections, Lincoln offered Cameron a place in his cabinet, only to withdraw the offer when charges of bribery and corruption were leveled against Cameron. When these charges could not be substantiated, Lincoln—somewhat red-faced—reappointed Cameron as his Secretary of War.

If Lincoln had doubts about inviting Cameron to join his cabinet, there never was any question that New York's William H. Seward and Salmon P. Chase of Ohio would be offered places in the septet. These men—themselves bitter rivals—had been among Lincoln's chief competitors for the Presidential nomination. And each had important followings within the Republican ranks. Lincoln knew that he would have to muster all his administrative acumen in order to deal with the powerful, strong-willed Seward and Chase.

Seward, distinguished Governor and Senator from New York, was perhaps the best-known Republican in America in 1860. Indeed, he was the leading Republican candidate going into the Chicago convention. Aside from his own talents, which were considerable, Seward's political manager was New York state's powerful machine politician, Thurlow Weed. As a tribute to New York's huge bloc of electoral votes, and in deference to Seward's place of leadership within the party, he was appointed Secretary of State, traditionally the highest cabinet position and the heir to the

Presidential throne. Well aware of Seward's political strength, Lincoln sought to establish himself as the chief executive in fact as well as in name. In one of his first and most important political moves, Lincoln refused to go to New York to confer with Seward about cabinet appointments. Any such discussions, Lincoln explained, must be in Illinois, on *his* home turf. Not only did Weed ultimately come to Springfield to discuss Seward's place among Lincoln's advisors, but Lincoln made it perfectly clear that both New Yorkers would be subordinate to the President in national and party matters.

Chase, too, had an important following which made him indispensable to Lincoln's cabinet. An able administrator, he was a former Democrat and leader of the defunct Liberty party which had espoused anti-slavery principles in the Presidential campaigns of 1840 and 1844. Chase served two terms as Governor of Ohio. Among Republicans, he was a leading spokesman of the Free Soil-Democratic element which drew valuable support to Lincoln's administration. Even more significant, Chase was extremely popular with Eastern abolitionists. Ironically, some Republicans feared that the greatest danger facing their new party was, in Joshua Leavitt's words, that it "alleged to be nothing but an elongation of the Whig party"—a party which died in the 1850s. Chase, therefore, had special appeal to Republican party leaders. A former Democrat, he was an experienced politician with a reputation as an abolitionist. Further, his hostility toward the Weed faction provided Lincoln with a weighty counterbalance to Seward.

The other cabinet appointments created far fewer problems for Lincoln. In order to satisfy the party faithful, each geographical section of the country had to be represented. Because of New England's importance in shipping, this region traditionally supplied the Secretary of the Navy. Lincoln's choice (selected actually by Vice-President-Elect Hamlin of Maine) was a Connecticut Yankee, Gideon Welles. Welles was appointed Secretary of the Navy as the representative of New England's former Democrats who championed the



Republican cause. As founder of the *Hartford Evening Press*, a party organ, Welles had helped establish the Republican party in Connecticut. Despite overwhelming difficulties, Welles built a strong navy and held the office of Secretary of the Navy longer than any previous incumbent.

To round out his cabinet, Lincoln needed representation from the border slave states. First, it was vitally important to reward Republican allegiances in these states. But Lincoln also hoped that by appointing cabinet members from states in the upper South, his party would assure Southerners that slavery would not be destroyed where it already existed. With these principles in mind, Missouri's Edward Bates was a natural choice. An elder statesman of the Republican party, Bates' political career was spent largely as a conservative antislavery Whig. In 1860 he became a major contender for the Republican Presidential bid. Resembling Lincoln in many ways, Bates had a sharp legal mind and opposed secession on constitutional grounds. Had the Weed faction not pressured Lincoln into appointing Seward Secretary of State, Bates probably would have headed the State Department. After much deliberation, Lincoln finally appointed Bates his Attorney General. According to Randall, in selecting Bates for this post, Lincoln "chose a conservative legal advisor" who later was "indisposed to push the enforcement of severe wartime laws. He thus gave a mild tone to those executive functions that have to do with the preparation and conduct of prosecutions in the courts."

Lincoln selected another border state Republican for his Postmaster General, Montgomery Blair of Maryland. "The Blairs" were among the best-known political families of Lincoln's day. The eldest, Francis P. Blair, served in Andrew Jackson's "Kitchen Cabinet" during the 1830s. One son, Frank Blair, Jr., was, like Bates, a leader in Missouri's Republican party. Montgomery Blair, a graduate of West Point (the only member of Lincoln's cabinet with military training), reached national prominence as counsel for the slave, Dred Scott, in the 1857 *Dred Scott v. Sandford* case. Blair's

chief rival for the position of Postmaster General was Henry Winter Davis, a fellow Marylander and cousin of Lincoln's manager, David Davis. Whereas Blair received the support of the ex-Democrats within the Republican party, Davis' appointment was favored by the ex-Whig faction. But Blair ultimately triumphed. A conservative emancipationist who advocated colonization of the Negro, Blair was more popular in Maryland than Davis. So incensed was Seward with the appointment of another former Democrat to Lincoln's council that he threatened to withdraw his acceptance as Secretary of State. Only a diplomatic note from Lincoln halted Seward's departure from the cabinet even before it had officially met. Such was the nature of the intra-party factionalism which would plague Lincoln's cabinet.

When Lincoln finally gathered his cabinet together, he presided over as inharmonious an assembly as one could imagine. Yet the President-Elect had successfully awarded cabinet representation to each of the leading factions in his party. That they were not like-minded men is not surprising since, as Carman and Luthin have remarked, the Republican party was itself "a composite of many mutually suspicious groups." In Randall's opinion, "No one consistent principle, unless that of opportunism, had been followed in the selection of the cabinet. Its members did not agree with Lincoln nor among themselves; they did not pull the same way." One thing is for certain, however, all of the cabinet appointees had actively supported the Republican ticket in 1860. The differences between them, as Randall observed, "were differences within the Republican party."

Significantly, Lincoln chose four former Democrats (Chase, Welles, Cameron, and Blair) and three ex-Whigs (Seward, Smith, and Bates). Naturally, this imbalance concerned the former Whigs who, Willard King writes, "assumed that they would have cabinet places proportionate to their great majority in the new party." Despite constant hounding by ex-Whigs for cabinet slots, Lincoln awarded positions to ex-Democrats "far beyond their relative strength in the party." According

to King, Lincoln accepted the Democrats' "favorite argument—that the Republicans must look to the Democratic ranks for future accessions . . . . The Republicans already included most of the northern Whigs." When reminded that he had appointed "four Democrats and only three Whigs," Lincoln informed one critic that since he was himself an old-line Whig, the cabinet was thus balanced four to four.

With such a shaky beginning, it is not surprising that the attrition rate in Lincoln's cabinet was high. Excluding Seward and Welles who remained in office at Lincoln's death, six changes were made in the original seven-member cabinet. Cameron was the first to go. His method of awarding military contracts came under fire in 1862, and Edwin M. Stanton of Pennsylvania was appointed Secretary of War. In failing health, Smith resigned late in 1862, and another Hoosier, John P. Usher, assumed his office. Chase—after numerous threats—resigned in June, 1864, and his chair was first occupied by William P. Fessenden of Maine, then by Indiana's Hugh McCulloch. Bates resigned in 1864 and was followed by James Speed. Governor William Denison of Ohio succeeded Blair as Postmaster General in the same year.

To what degree did these men influence Lincoln? How successful were Lincoln's advisors in coping with the administrative problems posed by the Civil War? These and other questions are the focus of the biographical sketches in the pages that follow. Diversified almost to a fault, faction-ridden, and quarrelsome, Lincoln's cabinet became nevertheless a winning team. Lincoln, wrote Presidential secretary John George Nicolay, "Took into the cabinet his rivals, and made them his ministers and servants." Created out of political expediency, Lincoln's cabinet of all factions nevertheless performed satisfactorily. It provided surprisingly strong leadership in the midst of a great and crippling brothers' war.

John David Smith, Ph.D.

# Edward Bates

(1793-1869)

Lincoln's Attorney General was a late-comer to the Republican party. As late as 1856 Bates refused to admit the demise of the Whig party, and not until 1860 did he endorse the exclusion of slavery from the territories. The first cabinet officer selected from a state west of the Mississippi River, Bates, a former Know-Nothing, was a conservative legalist who during the Civil War "felt he stood in the midst of a social revolution that he thought deplorable." Early in the war the Missourian had much influence on Lincoln. He encouraged the President to deploy a squadron of warships on the Mississippi River. During the *Trent* crisis Bates considered appeasement of England more important than pressing for legal rights. But by 1863 Bates' star began to fall. He objected strongly to what he considered Lincoln's substitution of a government by force for a government by law. Specifically, Bates stymied his administration's attempts to seize Confederate property and denounced civil and political equality for the black man. Consistent with his conservative views, Bates favored compensated emancipation, compulsory deportation of the freed slaves, and opposed the recruitment of black troops. He resigned from the cabinet on November 24, 1864, convinced that radical politicians and generals had made impossible a return to the constitutional *status quo* at the end of the war.



# Montgomery Blair

(1813-1883)

Postmaster General Blair worked diligently to establish a postal system geared to a nation at war. In doing so Blair modernized the country's postal network. He organized mail service for the army, introduced compulsory payment of postage and free delivery in cities, and improved the postal registry system. A leader in establishing the international Postal Union Convention at Paris in 1863, at home Blair initiated the postal money order system and put a halt to the franking privileges of postmasters. Despite his conservative Democratic origins, Blair was a firm supporter of Lincoln. Early in the Sumter crisis he was the sole cabinet member to advise a show of force, believing that the Confederates would back down. Although Blair supported the Emancipation Proclamation, he cautioned Lincoln not to announce it until after the fall, 1862 elections. Blair, an ally of Welles, squabbled constantly with Seward, Stanton, and Chase. He feared that if the Radicals had their way, "they would make the manumission of the slaves the means of infusing their blood into our whole system by blending with it '*amalgamation, equality and fraternity.*'"

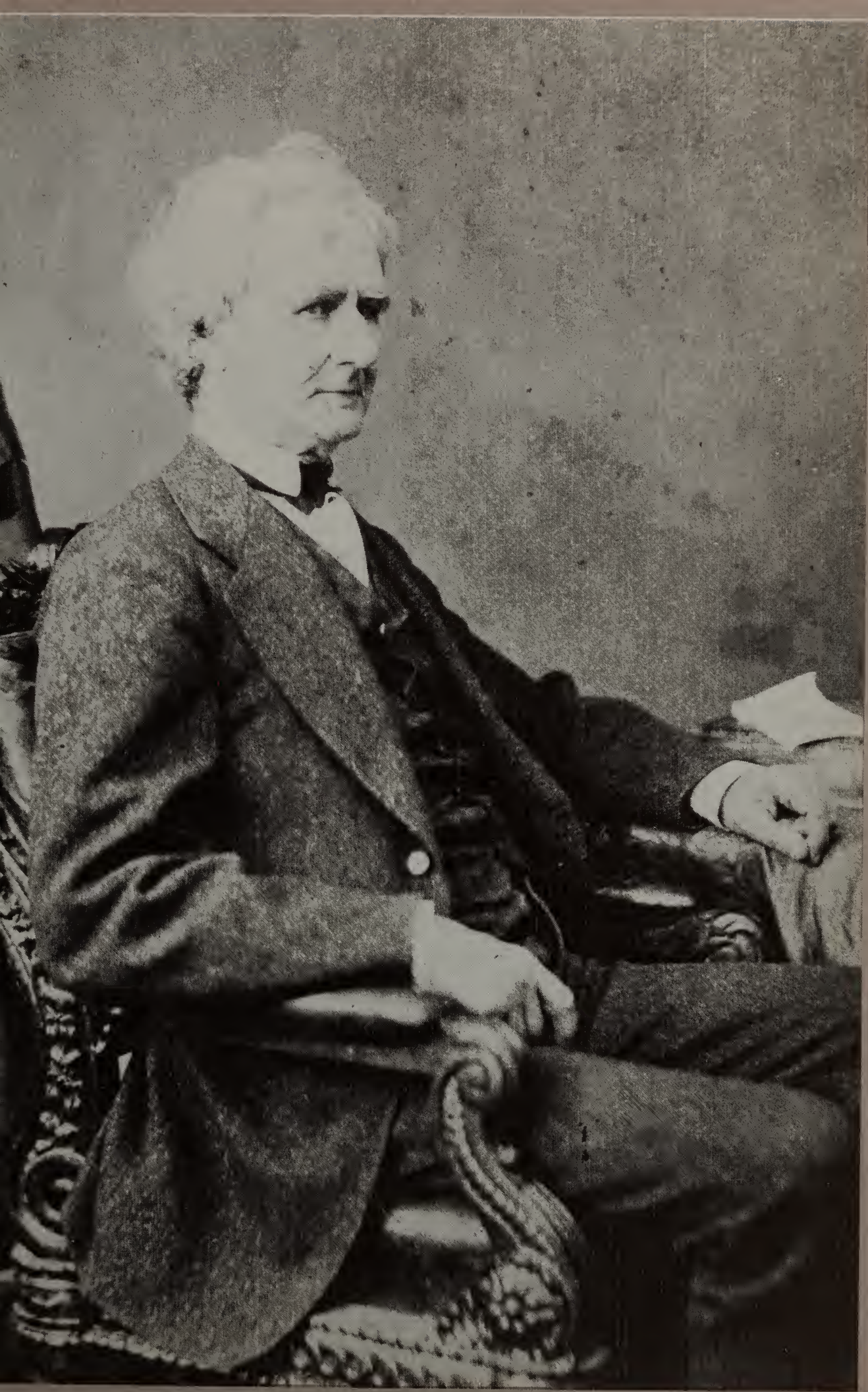


# Simon Cameron

(1799-1889)

In the crucial first months of the war Cameron caused Lincoln almost as much pain and embarrassment as did the Confederate Army. The Pennsylvania businessman and politico was a most unfortunate choice for a cabinet appointment. Not only did Cameron lack knowledge of warfare and military administration, but he had a reputation as a politician of dubious integrity. From the start Cameron's department was marred by confusion, inefficiency, and fraud. His practice of accepting into Federal service units recruited by individuals clashed with the state-sponsored quota system in effect. According to historian A. H. Meneely, "political considerations too often governed" Cameron's "judgments and his actions in departmental administration. He dispensed civil and military offices and army contracts in a notorious fashion; corruption became rampant." Although Cameron personally did not profit from these practices, many others did. By late 1861 Lincoln was besieged with complaints and demands for Cameron's removal. The Secretary finally went too far when he advocated freeing and arming the slaves—months before Lincoln included these as war measures. In January, 1862, Lincoln removed Cameron by appointing him minister to Russia. Three months later the House of Representatives censured Cameron's mismanagement of military contracts.





# Salmon Portland Chase

(1808-1873)

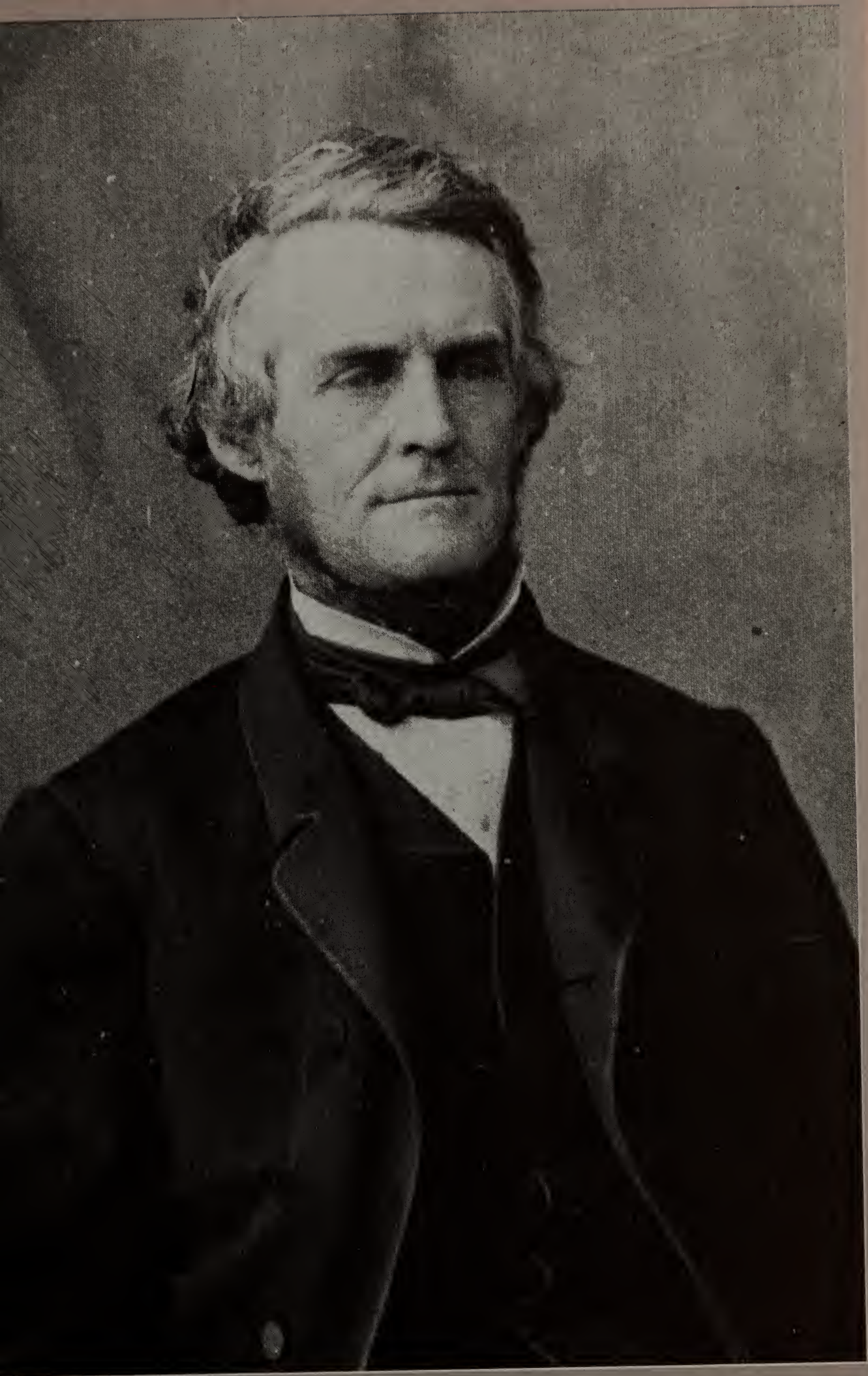
Like Seward, Chase objected to Lincoln's apparent inaction early in the war. But unlike Seward, Chase never came fully to support the chief executive. "Though not quite disloyal to the President," writes Randall, Chase "nevertheless became the center of an anti-Lincoln movement while retaining his position in the cabinet." Chase objected to the Railsplitter's seeming inertia, lax control over his administration, and weak commitment to emancipation. At constant odds with Seward, in December, 1862, Chase's conniving led to a cabinet crisis in which both secretaries tendered their resignations. Although Lincoln refused to accept either resignation, Chase became even more of a disruptive element in the cabinet when friends promoted him as Republican candidate for the Presidency in 1864. In spite of his bickering, Chase deserves credit for originating the national banking system (established February 25, 1863). Although instrumental in financing the Northern war effort, it depreciated the currency. In 1864 Lincoln appointed Chase Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. After Lincoln's death, ironically, Chase's attitudes toward secession and the South more closely resembled the President's moderate position than his own earlier radical views. The Lincoln-Chase relationship—stiff and formal—was strained by Chase's constant ambitions for the Presidency.



# William Dennison

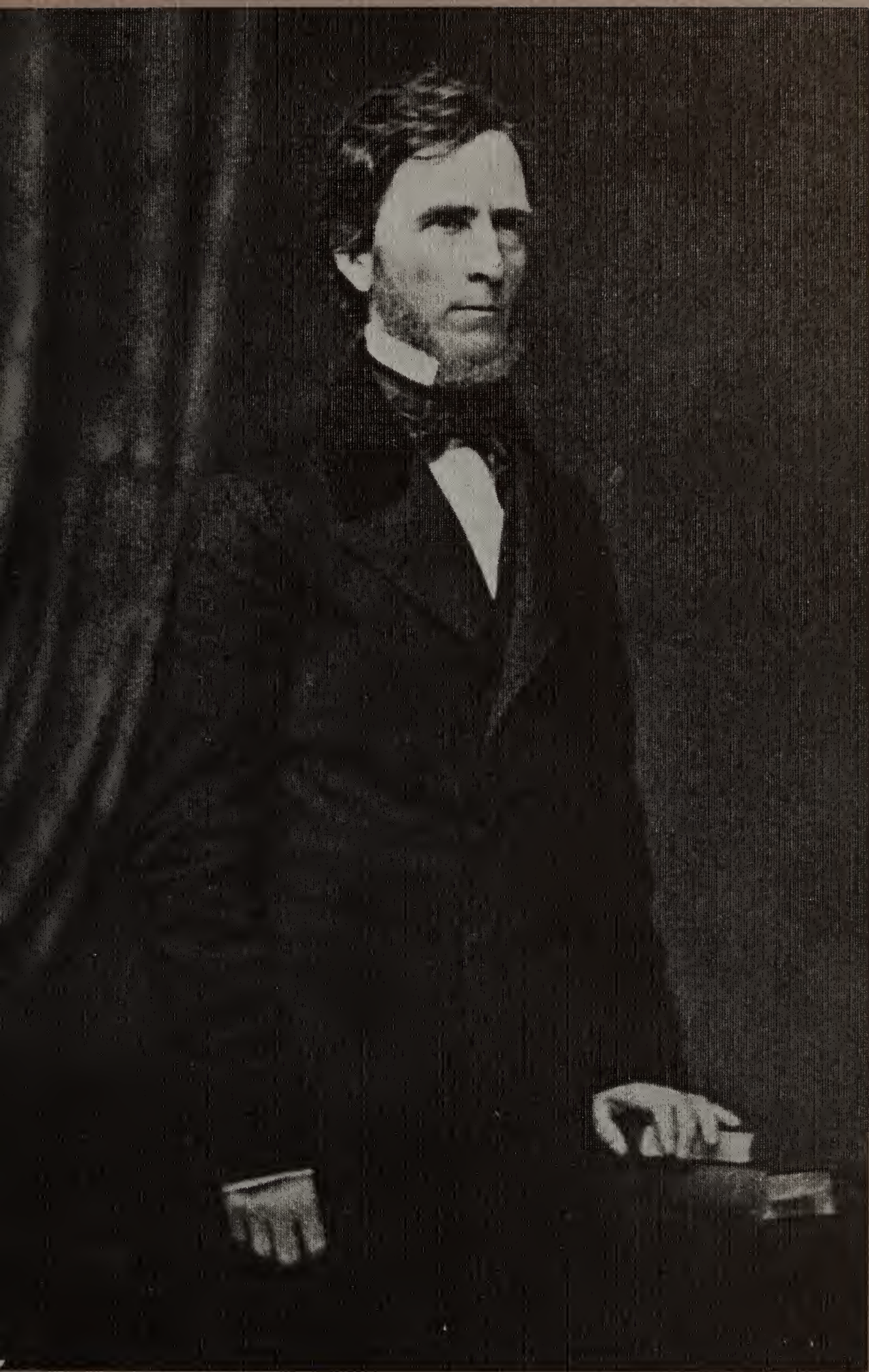
(1815-1882)

Governor of Ohio, 1860-1862, Dennison was one of the first Whig leaders of his state to join the Republican party. As early as 1844 Dennison opposed the extension of slavery, and later he voiced his disapproval of Ohio's proscriptive "Black Laws." In 1856 Dennison headed his state's delegation to the Republican nominating convention in Philadelphia. Four years later he succeeded Chase as governor. Like other Northern war governors, Dennison faced difficulties recruiting and equipping state troops. Yet the Ohioan quickly raised more than the Federal quota for his state. Even before the outbreak of hostilities, Dennison expressed concern over Ohio's proximity to slaveholding territory. Once the war had begun, he dispatched George B. McClellan with Ohio troops to assist loyal Virginians in driving Confederates from the western portion of their state. Aristocratic in nature and vulnerable to charges of incompetence early in the war, Dennison was unpopular with residents of his state and failed to be renominated by Ohio Republicans in 1862. Dennison's importance in the party, however, was revealed in 1864 when he supported Lincoln over Chase and chaired the Republican National Convention. No doubt as a reward for party loyalty, Dennison followed Blair in 1864 as Postmaster General, serving until 1866 when his radical views clashed with President Andrew Johnson's conservative Reconstruction policies.



# William Pitt Fessenden (1806-1869)

Fessenden earned his anti-Jackson, antislavery credentials in the 1830s and 1840s while serving as Whig state legislator and Congressman from Maine. Elected to the U.S. Senate in 1854, Fessenden was a leader in organizing the Republican party and in opposing the Buchanan administration. Chairman of the Senate's Finance Committee, 1861-1864, Fessenden was a strong supporter of income tax legislation to meet wartime financial needs. Although he generally endorsed Chase's financial policies, Fessenden objected to the issuance of inflationary greenbacks. As Secretary of the Treasury, Fessenden battled inflation, an almost empty treasury, little incoming revenue, and maturing loans. By the time of McCulloch's appointment in March, 1865, Fessenden was well on his way toward meeting these fiscal obstacles. He raised the interest rate on government bonds and secured a large loan through Jay Cooke's banking house. As a Senator, Fessenden played a key role in Congressional Reconstruction. He was a restraining force within the Radical camp, whom Lincoln termed, "a Radical without the petulant and vicious fretfulness of many Radicals."



# Hugh McCulloch

(1808-1895)

After first consulting with Thurlow Weed, Lincoln appointed McCulloch Secretary of the Treasury in March, 1865. Although he had begun his career as a lawyer, in 1835 McCulloch was appointed cashier and manager of the Fort Wayne Branch of the State Bank of Indiana where he served until 1856. At this time he became president of the newly established Bank of the State of Indiana. A man of proven financial expertise, from 1863-1865 McCulloch was Comptroller of the Currency under Chase and Fessenden. In this capacity he had the responsibility of instituting the National Bank Act of 1863. As Secretary of the Treasury, McCulloch continued the policies of his predecessors. After the war he confronted two massive problems: retiring the \$428 million in greenbacks issued during the war, and reestablishing a system of Federal taxation in the South. An advocate of "hard" money, McCulloch began such a speedy return to specie payment that the nation experienced a sharp economic slump in 1867. At an earlier moment of crisis, however—after Lincoln's assassination—McCulloch wisely purchased government securities to help thwart a financial panic. McCulloch served as Secretary of the Treasury until 1869. In 1884 he resumed cabinet duties briefly as Secretary of the Treasury under President Chester A. Arthur.

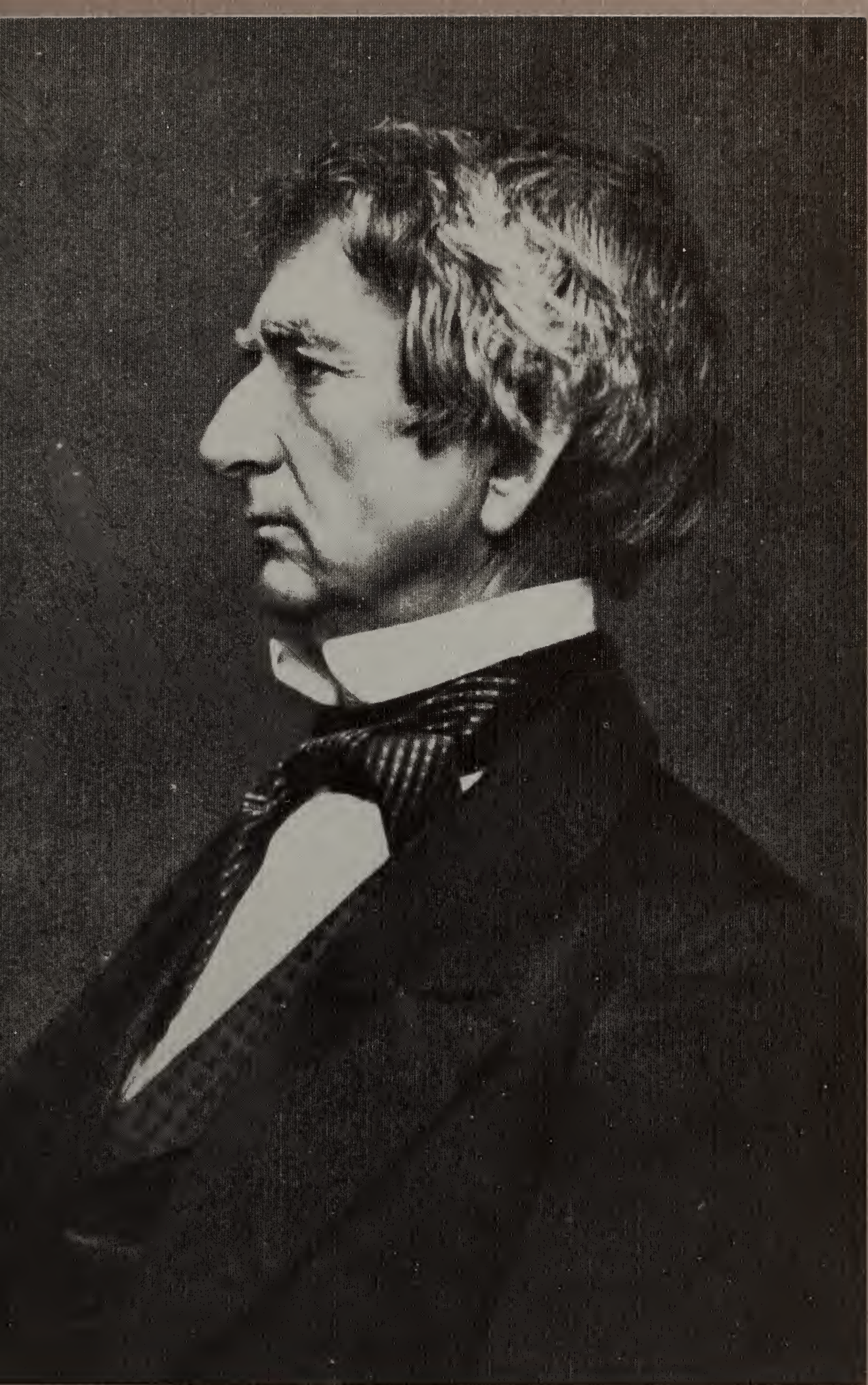




# William Henry Seward

(1801-1879)

Despite Lincoln's explicit statements to the contrary, Seward entered the post of Secretary of State believing that he would determine administration policies in all areas. On April 1, 1861, the *New Yorker* sent Lincoln a memorandum, "Some Thoughts for the President's Consideration," in which Seward complained of the President's inaction, advocated embroiling the United States in a war against Spain and France, and suggested that the Secretary oversee the administration. Lincoln's firm reply put Seward in his place—that of a loyal and trusted subordinate. Seward went on to have a brilliant tenure as head of the State Department. "More than any preceding secretary," wrote Dexter Perkins, "he conducted his diplomatic correspondence with an eye to public opinion at home." In the midst of crisis, Seward was cool, optimistic, and adroit. He exhibited considerable tact in his handling of the *Trent* affair, the question of European intervention, and French inroads in Mexico. An expansionist, in 1867 Seward negotiated the cession of Alaska and was an early advocate of the annexation of Hawaii. On domestic matters, Seward vigorously conducted the government's program to arrest disloyal Northerners. Despite his famous antebellum statements opposing slavery, during the war Seward exhibited little radicalism on the race issue. In fact, he interpreted the Emancipation Proclamation and the Thirteenth Amendment conservatively—as war measures, not vehicles of social change. Flexible, humorous, and relaxed in office, Seward came to be Lincoln's most influential counselor. Others in the cabinet resented Seward's sway with the President.



# Caleb Blood Smith

(1808-1864)

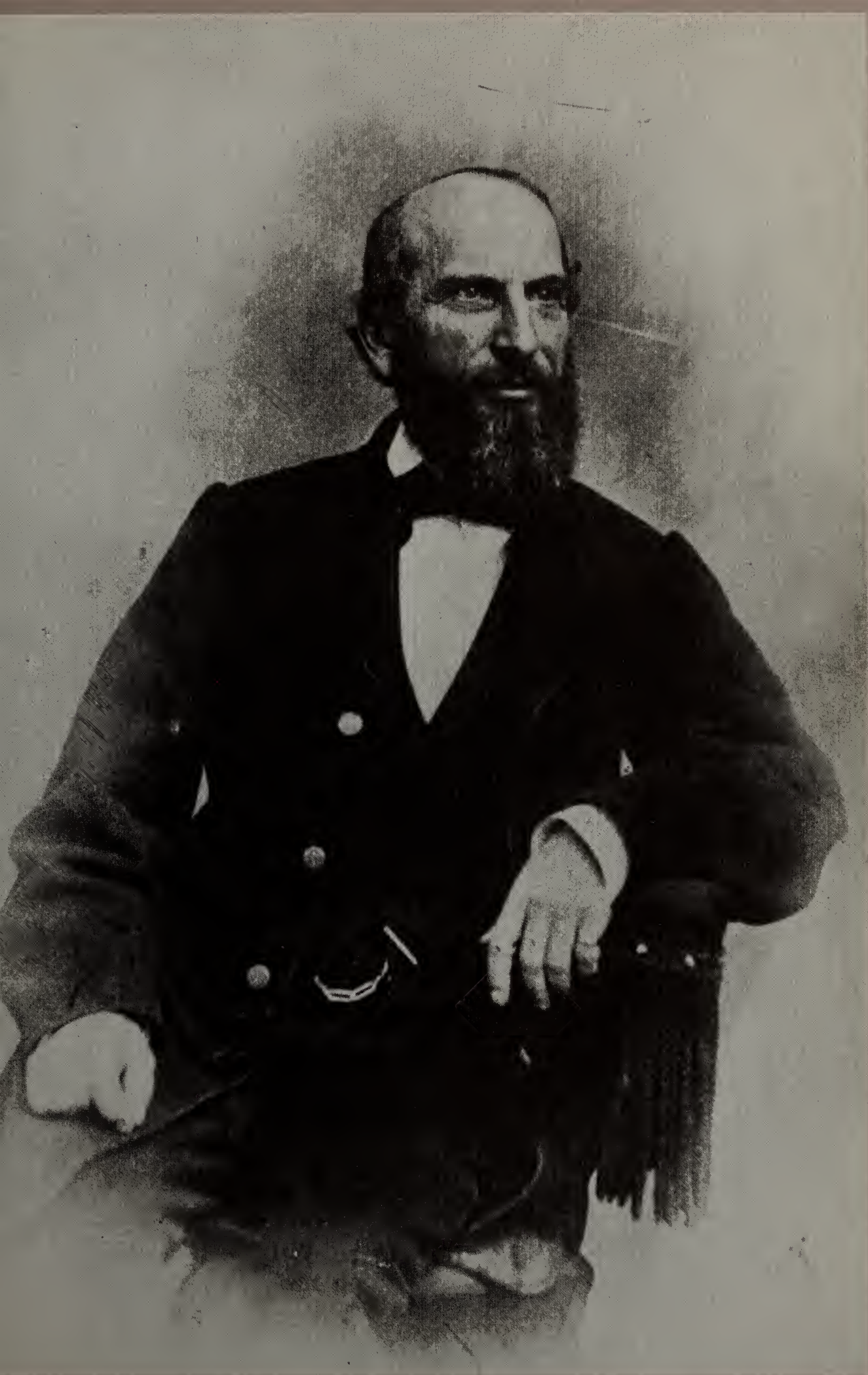
Smith, obscure and colorless, had the least eventful tenure of any of Lincoln's original seven appointees. Early in 1862 Smith contemplated retirement because he disliked clerical and administrative work. Ill health and outside interests further lessened Smith's effectiveness. The Interior Department was really no place for Smith who, from the start of his administration, eyed a Federal judgeship back home in Indiana. The office of Secretary of the Interior, the youngest and least prestigious of the executive offices, was established in 1849 "out of a motley collection of agencies which the other Departments did not want or could not handle." Indian affairs, the public domain, patents, and pensions fell under the control of Smith's crowded department. During his twenty-two months in office, Smith distributed the many patronage jobs within his control, administered land and relief claims resulting from the 1862 Indian uprising in Minnesota, and assisted in executing the terms of the act chartering the Union Pacific Railroad. He opposed the arming of Afro-Americans. Of the Indians, Smith wrote, "It is apparent to all . . . that they are incompetent to manage their own business or to protect their rights in their intercourse with the white race." In December, 1862, Smith's wish was fulfilled—he was appointed judge of the U.S. District Court for Indiana.



# James Speed

(1812-1887)

“I think to lose Kentucky is nearly the same as to lose the whole game,” wrote Lincoln in September, 1861. Not only was the President a native Kentuckian, but he recognized the state’s crucial strategic and psychological value to the Union cause. Louisville’s Speed brothers—James and Joshua—were intimate friends and political allies of Lincoln. They served as his “eyes and ears” in the Bluegrass State. Lincoln’s appointment of James Speed as Attorney General thus was inspired by reasons personal and political. Speed was a conservative Unionist who, in 1861, publicly favored Kentucky neutrality but privately ran guns into the state for loyal Kentuckians. As a state senator in 1862, Speed was one of only two Kentucky legislators not to denounce Lincoln’s compensated emancipation policy. Before his appointment to the cabinet in 1864, Speed labored vigorously mustering Kentuckians into the Federal Army. In that year Speed served as a delegate to the Baltimore convention which renominated his friend. Lincoln described Speed as “an honest man and a gentleman, . . . one of those well-poised men, not too common here, who are not spoiled by a big office.” Speed—surely to Lincoln’s surprise—joined the radical wing of the cabinet and, on the eve of Lincoln’s assassination, advocated a strict policy of reconstruction.

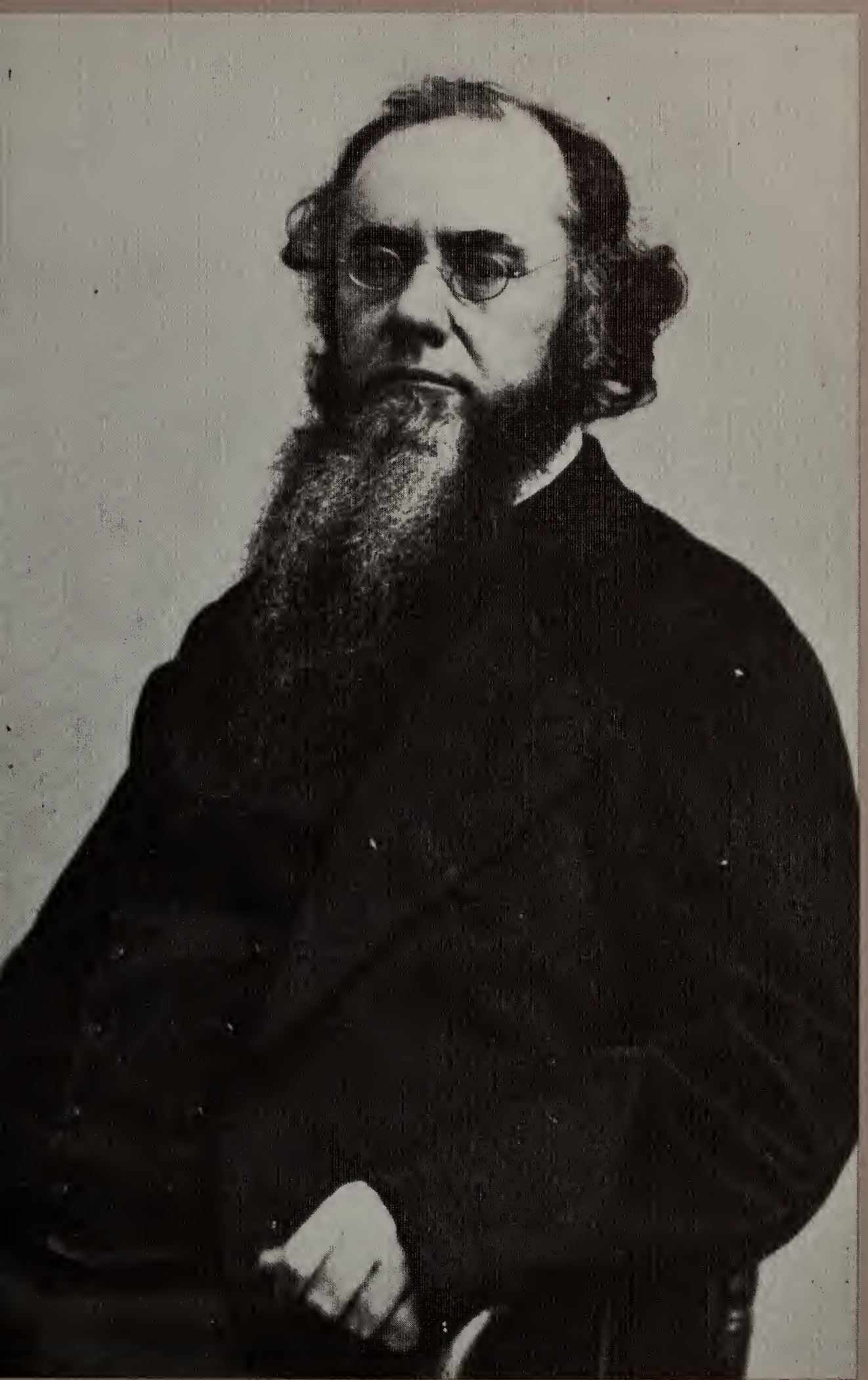


# Edwin McMasters Stanton

(1814-1869)

Lincoln appointed Stanton Secretary of War on January 14, 1862, and the Pennsylvanian immediately brought order, regularity, and precision to a department which had bordered on chaos under Cameron. One of the country's most celebrated antebellum lawyers, Stanton, a lifelong Democrat, had served as Attorney General in the waning days of the Buchanan administration. Like Lincoln, Stanton was above all a devoted Unionist. According to Benjamin P. Thomas and Harold M. Hyman, Stanton "always had a capacity for total identification with a cause, an institution, or a person." Stanton went to work untangling and reforming the War Department with unmatched energy and dedication. He hired and fired staff, tightened governmental security, wedded Congressional allies, systematized government contracts, and generally supervised army operations with a deft, efficient hand. Stanton distrusted professional military men and, in his characteristic gruff and brusque manner, implored them to take the offensive. The new Secretary of War encouraged Lincoln to free and arm the blacks as important steps toward winning the war with utmost speed. Only Stanton among the cabinet members urged Lincoln to issue the Emancipation Proclamation in July, 1862. Although early in the war Stanton expressed contempt for Lincoln, the two men came to trust and admire one another. In the cabinet Stanton supported Chase and disagreed most frequently with Welles and Blair.





# John Palmer Usher

(1816-1889)

A native New Yorker, Usher settled in Terre Haute, Indiana, where he reached prominence as a lawyer and state legislator. A long-time acquaintance of Lincoln, Usher strongly supported the Republican party in the election of 1860. In March, 1861, Interior Secretary Smith—a fellow Hoosier—appointed Usher to the new position of Assistant Secretary of the Interior. Usher traveled to Minnesota in 1862 to help restore peace during the Sioux uprising and to investigate alleged robberies of Indian lands by government officials. With Smith's resignation, Usher received the Secretary's portfolio. Usher's attempts to institute reforms in Indian affairs are clouded by charges of corruption throughout his tenure. A stockholder in the Union Pacific Railway Company—Eastern Division, Usher's Indian removal policy opened railroad rights-of-way through reservations. In July, 1864, Congress granted a Federal subsidy to Usher's company. Although the Secretary's personal "gain was slight and indirect," the corruption in the Indian system and in the building of the transcontinental railroad left a blot on Usher's reputation.



# Gideon Welles

(1802-1878)

With henna-gray wig and massive chin whiskers, Welles looked more like Father Neptune than the head of one of the world's first modern navies. A career journalist, Welles' sole naval experience (1846-1849) came as chief of the navy's Bureau of Provisions and Clothing in the Polk administration. Nevertheless, the Secretary of the Navy performed his duties as well as any of Lincoln's official family. Welles went to work immediately in 1861 reorganizing his small department and, according to Howard K. Beale, "created overnight a navy where there was none." Welles championed the use of ironclad vessels, the blockade of the Confederacy's coastline, and the multi-theatre offensive strategy employed by the Lincoln regime. Unlike Cameron, Welles tolerated neither scandal nor corruption in the Navy Department. Tactless and unwilling to bend to political expediency, Welles made few friends during his eight-year tenure in office. He and Seward harbored a feud which stemmed from antebellum grievances. Welles resented Stanton's treatment of the navy as a mere adjunct of the army. According to Stanton's biographers, the two men were incompatible; whenever possible Stanton "side-stepped the peppery old shell-back [Welles]." These were yet other examples of the internal discord in Lincoln's cabinet.







## KEY TO THE PICTURE

### THE MEN

1. PRESIDENT LINCOLN.
2. WILLIAM H. SEWARD, Secretary of State.
3. SALMON P. CHASE, Secretary of Treasury.
4. EDWIN M. STANTON, Secretary of War.
5. GIDEON WELLES, Secretary of Navy.
6. EDWARD BATES, Attorney-General.
7. MONTGOMERY BLAIR, Postmaster-General.
8. CALEB B. SMITH, Secretary of Interior.

### ACCESSORIES

9. Photograph of Simon Cameron, Ex-Sec. War.
10. Portrait of Andrew Jackson.
11. Parchment Copy of the Constitution.
12. Map of Seat of War in Virginia.
13. Map showing Slave Population in light and shade.
14. War Department Portfolio.
15. Story's "Commentaries on the Constitution."
16. Whiting's "War Powers of the President."
17. *New York Tribune*.
18. Two volumes *Congressional Globe*.

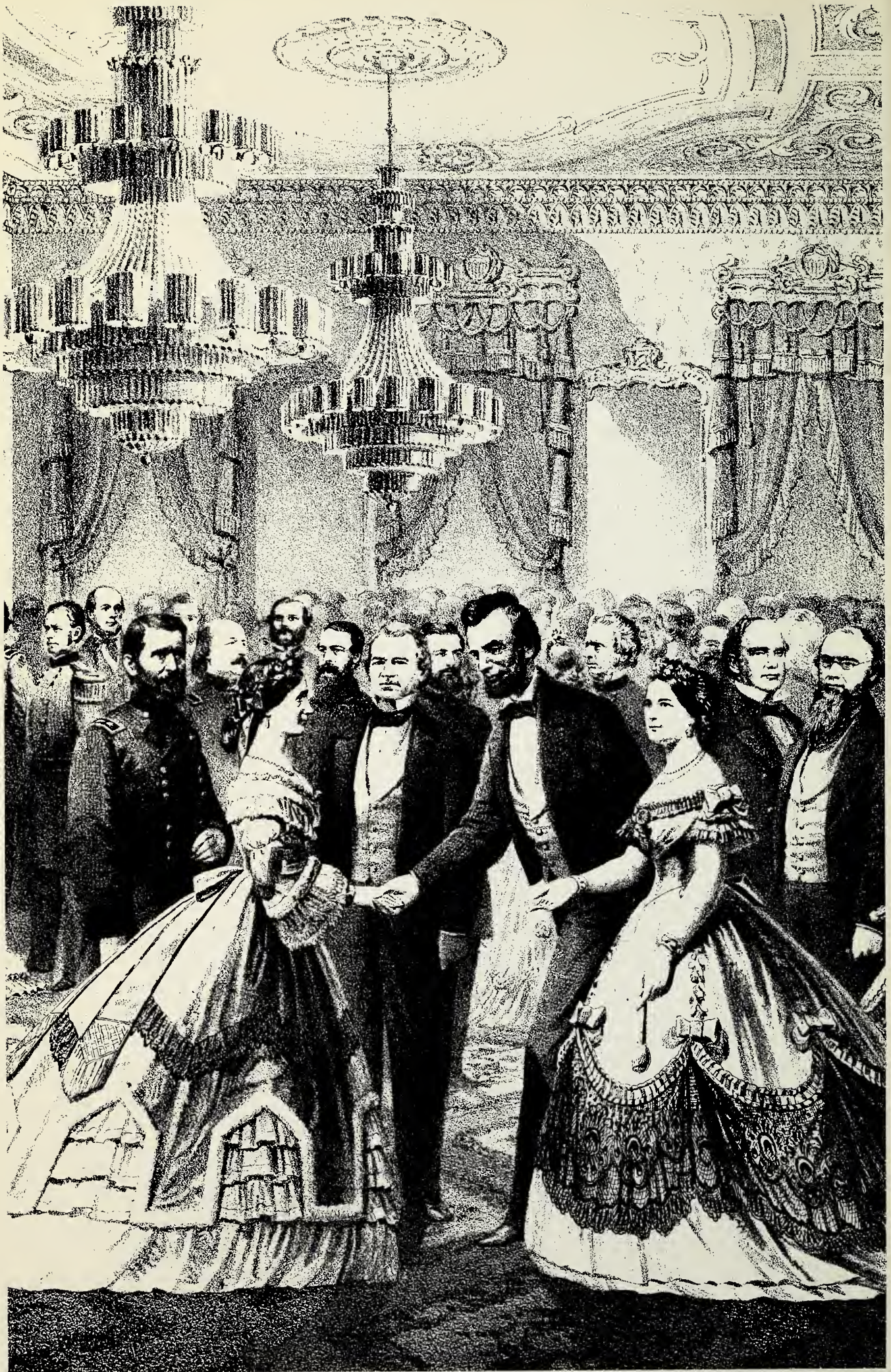
The room is the Official Chamber of the White House, in which all Cabinet meetings are held, and in which the President receives calls upon official business.

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